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SUBJECT: SINGAPORE ANNOUNCES 16 PERCENT EMISSIONS CUT GOAL

11. (U) SUMMARY: Singapore announced plans to reduce its carbon emissions by 16 percent before 2020 if a global agreement on climate change is reached during next week's talks in Copenhagen. Singapore did not provide details about the measures it would institute to drive the cuts. Prime Minister Lee will lead the Singapore delegation in Copenhagen. In the context of climate talks, Singapore opposes using per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) as the only measure to determine countries' climate change mitigation responsibility and capability. Singapore contributes less than one percent to global emissions but its per capita emissions are high. Singapore considers itself an "alternative-energy disadvantaged" country and is home to many greenhouse gas intensive industries. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Singapore pledged on December 2 to reduce carbon emissions growth by 16 percent below "business as usual" levels before 2020 on condition that a global agreement on climate change is agreed during talks in Copenhagen. The Government of Singapore (GOS) hosted a limited press conference on December 2 to announce the emissions targets, but did not provide details about the regulatory and fiscal measures that would drive the emission cuts. Singapore will likely provide more information about those measures after the talks in Copenhagen, Lee Choon Phua, Assistant Director in the International Relations Division at the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources told Econoff.

13. (SBU) Phua indicated that officials from Singapore would start departing for Copenhagen at the end of the week. The Singapore delegation participating in the climate talks is expected to include: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong; Senior Minister Professor 1S. Jayakumar, Chair of Singapore's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change; and Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim.

14. (SBU) Singapore is a small, low-lying country dependent on imports of water, food and energy, and it is concerned about rising sea levels and the potential increase in the prevalence of vector-borne diseases like dengue fever that could result from climate change. However, Singapore is also concerned about the effect climate change could have on its open and trade-oriented economy if countries use environmental standards as a form of protectionism that impedes the flow of trade, contacts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Organizations Directorate told Econoff.

Developed Economy; Limited Alternative Energy

15. (SBU) Singapore has relatively high per-capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, though overall Singapore accounts for approximately 0.2 percent of global emissions. In the context of UN negotiations on climate change, Singapore views itself as an "alternative-energy disadvantaged" country and opposes using per-capita gross domestic product as the only measure of Singapore's climate change mitigation

responsibility and capability. Singapore, despite being a highly developed and wealthy country, is not an Annex I country under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

16. (SBU) Roughly 50 percent of Singapore's GHG emissions come from power generation, which will remain dependent on fossil fuels (i.e., natural gas) for the foreseeable future. The GOS is investing heavily in research and development of renewable energy technologies, but Singapore lacks the wind speeds to implement wind power locally and has substantial cloud cover, making solar power a limited option. Singapore has put more emphasis on energy efficiency by restricting car ownership, encouraging "green" building, and offering incentives for households to reduce energy usage. In 2009 the GOS published a Sustainable Development Blueprint, which outlined goals to improve energy efficiency by 20 percent by 2020 and 35 percent by 2030. Still, Singapore remains a hub for manufacturing, oil refining, shipping and aviation, which are all GHG-intensive sectors.

SHIELDS